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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MUNICH 000069

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TAGS: MARR NATO PARM PREL GM MD

SUBJECT: A/S FRIED'S MEETING WITH MOLDOVAN PRESIDENT VORONIN

REF: MUNICH 52

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Classified By: CONSUL GENERAL ERIC G. NELSON, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a bilateral meeting on the margins of the Munich Security Conference on February 9, EUR A/S Daniel Fried urged Vladimir Voronin, President of Moldova, not to succumb to Russian pressure regarding international guarantees for Moldova's neutrality. Voronin should resist Russia's attempts to distract Moldova from efforts to settle the Transnistria conflict, or to tie recognition of neutrality with a settlement unless it was on Moldova's terms. Voronin said he was willing to discuss neutrality separately and was reluctant to frustrate Russia on the package deal out of fear of getting nowhere on either issue. Fried expressed appreciation for Moldova's close consultations with the USG on CFE and said the U.S. would continue to respect the limits of their concessions. He promised Department support for Senator Lugar's efforts to repeal the Jackson-Vanik restrictions on Moldova. End Summary.

¶2. (U) President Vladimir Voronin and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Andrei Stratan, as well as Voronin foreign policy advisor Marc Tkaciuk represented Moldova at bilateral talks on the margins of the 44th Munich Security Conference on February 9. EUR A/S Daniel Fried and EUR/DAS David Kramer represented the USG. Notetaker was Kit Traub, USOSCE Vienna.

¶3. (C) President Voronin reported improving social, cultural and economic relations with Russia -- this was progress compared to the "general freeze" on bilateral relations following the 2003 Kozak memo. Voronin complained that the problem now was Russia's insistence on an international agreement "guaranteeing" Moldovan neutrality as a condition for Moscow moving forward on resolving the Transnistria conflict. He said this had been President Putin's focus during Voronin's discussions in Moscow on February 4 (Yuri Zubakov, Deputy Secretary of the Russian Security Council also participated in those talks). Voronin pointed out that neutrality was already established in the Moldovan constitution, but said the Russians were worried that future Moldovan governments could revoke that provision. Therefore, they were seeking internationally guaranteed neutrality.

¶4. (C) Voronin said he would not agree to anything regarding neutrality until the 5-plus-2 process was complete. He said he had rejected Putin's insistence on a neutrality text unless it came as part of a package deal including settlement of the TN conflict. He also said the Russians had not offered any promise that they could deliver the Transnistrians -- convincing Tiraspol would be up to Chisinau. Voronin said Moldova would not accept an international "guarantee" of neutrality, but Chisinau authorities were reviewing whether an international "recognition" of neutrality might be a way of satisfying the Russians, while preserving Moldova's sovereignty and room for future maneuver. If the U.S. supported Moldova, they would be tougher on this point with Russia. Voronin also asked for USG assistance in considering all the possible implications for Moldova of "recognition" of neutrality.

¶5. (C) A/S Fried said this looked like a bad deal: it was clear what the Russians got out of it, but not clear how it would benefit Moldova. Russia was trying to trade settlement of Transnistria for a Russian veto over Moldovan foreign policy. Moldova was sovereign, and its future should be Moldova's alone to decide. The USG supported Moldova's territorial integrity and reunification without any conditions. Skeptical of Putin's motives so late in his presidency, DAS Kramer urged Voronin to consider that Putin's interest in the Moldovan neutrality issue looked like an effort to distract from settlement of the TN conflict.

¶6. (C) A/S Fried noted that Moldova's neutrality is already established under its constitution and strongly advised Voronin to resist both Russian efforts to assert rights as "guarantor" of neutrality and Russian attempts to make resolution of the TN conflict contingent on giving them that

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role. If it came to a package deal and Moldova asked the USG to take a formal role in recognizing the fact of Moldova's constitutional provision for neutrality, then the USG could consider doing so, A/S Fried said, but we would want to work closely with the Moldovans on the specifics to ensure there were no pitfalls. A/S Fried agreed to have USG experts review the text that Moldova is proposing.

¶7. (C) A/S Fried reiterated support for Moldova's territorial integrity and rejected seeing Kosovo's independence as a precedent for Transnistria or any other conflict. He said the U.S. would object loudly should there be moves toward declaring TN independence from the TN leadership or Russian consideration of recognizing such a declaration. Fried reiterated support for the repeal of the Jackson-Vanik restrictions on Moldova and noted the Department of State supported Senator Lugar's efforts in this matter. He suggested to Voronin that it would be good for him to push on this personally and for his Embassy in Washington to weigh in with the Congress.

¶8. (C) Voronin thanked A/S Fried for the firm U.S. support of Moldova, including on Euro-Atlantic integration, and said he was also satisfied with the EU's support. He appreciated NATO's engagement with Moldova, especially by Deputy Assistant Secretary General Bob Simmons in helping to revise their National Security Estimate. He noted the ongoing success of the EU's border assistance mission, EUBAM, cited Ukraine's help, and said that most TN businesses had now registered with Chisinau. Transnistrian banks remain the major exception.

¶9. (C) A/S Fried thanked Voronin for Moldova's consistent support in CFE negotiations. Fried acknowledged that the U.S. knows Moldova's position and will hold to it in upcoming CFE discussions with the Russians.

¶10. (U) DAS Kramer cleared this cable, which was coordinated

with Embassy Berlin.

¶11. (U) For more information on the 44th Conference and past conferences, visit: "<http://www.securityconference.de>".

¶12. (U) Previous reporting from Munich is available on our SIPRNET website at www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/munich/.
NELSON